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Academy Award-winning filmmaker premieres documentary on Landesa's Girls Project at Sundance Film Festival

SEATTLE – A new short documentary film on Landesa's Girls Project, called “After My Garden Grows,” by Academy Award Winner Megan Mylan, will premiere at the Sundance Film Festival on Tuesday, January 21 at 4:30pm.

The documentary follows teenager Monika Barman, in rural West Bengal India, as she grows a garden to feed her family, earn money to pay school fees and avoid an early marriage. Monika is one of more than 40,000 girls who participate in the Girls Project, a partnership between the government of West Bengal and the non-profit Landesa. The Girls Project aims to reduce the risk of child marriage, keep poor rural girls in school and empower them socially and economically by educating them about their rights and teaching them land-based livelihood skills such as organic gardening. Currently more than 40,000 girls in 1,000 villages across West Bengal are participating. The goal is to roll out the project nationwide and reach millions of girls.

According to UNICEF, while the legal age of marriage in India is 18, the median age of marriage for rural girls is 16. Nearly half of all girls in are currently married before they reach 18. Girls who marry early are more likely to drop out of school, to suffer health problems, to live in poverty, and to experience gender-based violence. These same girls are more likely to either die in childbirth or lose their newborn infants. For more information about the project see the [Girls Project](#) page on Landesa's website.

“After My Garden Grows” is a Principe Productions film supported by the Sundance Institute in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation with additional support from Kendeda Fund.

Ms. Mylan will be the keynote speaker at Landesa's Seed the Change Luncheon on Friday March 21. For more information about the luncheon, an annual event to raise awareness and support for women's land right, please view the [event registration page](#).

The film will be released in India later this year through a series of film premiere events and national grassroots distribution.

To learn more about Landesa's work in India, Africa, and China and read inspiring stories about some of the more than 100 million families who have benefitted from secure land rights see [Landesa's 2013 Fiscal Year Annual Report](#) or visit [Landesa.org](#).

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About Landesa

Landesa partners with governments and local organizations to ensure that the world's poorest families have secure rights over the land they till. Founded as the Rural Development Institute, Landesa has helped more than 100 million poor families gain legal control over their land since 1967. When families have secure rights to land, they can invest in their land to sustainably increase their harvests and reap the benefits—improved nutrition, health, and education—for generations. Learn more at [Landesa.org](https://www.landesa.org) and join us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).